



## How to Belong

Women's Agency in a  
Transnational World

Belinda Stillion Southard

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“Original and compelling, *How to Belong* transforms citizenship from a matter of location to one of embodied belonging and relationship. Through her riveting analyses, Southard reveals how women’s rhetorical practices—in West African peace networks, Liberian elections, and UN global governance—create regional, national, and global relationships, and in her careful arguments, she brilliantly enlarges our knowledge of performative deliberation, women’s rhetoric, and transnationalism.”

—Arabella Lyon, author of *Deliberative Acts: Democracy, Rhetoric, and Rights*

In *How to Belong*, Belinda Stillion Southard examines how women leaders throughout the world have asserted their rhetorical agency in troubling economic, social, and political conditions. Rather than utilizing the concept of citizenship to bolster political influence, the women in the case studies presented here rely on the power of relationships to create a more habitable world.

With the rise of global capitalism, many nation-states that have profited from invigorated flows of capital have also responded to the threat of increased human mobility by heightening national citizenship’s exclusionary power. Through a series of case studies that include women grassroots protesters, a woman president, and a woman United Nations director, Stillion Southard analyzes several examples of women, all as embodied subjects in a particular transnational context, pushing back against this often violent rise in nationalist rhetoric. While scholars have typically used the concept of citizenship to explain what it means to belong, Stillion Southard instead shows how these women have reimagined belonging in ways that have enabled them to create national, regional, and global communities.

As part of a broader conversation centered on exposing the violence of national citizenship and proposing ways of rejecting that violence, this book seeks to provide answers through the powerful rhetorical practices of resilient and inspiring women who have successfully negotiated what it means to belong, to be included, and to enact change beyond the boundaries of citizenship.

**Belinda Stillion Southard** is Associate Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Georgia. She is the author of *Militant Citizenship: Rhetorical Strategies of the National Woman’s Party, 1913–1920*, winner of the 2012 Marie Hochmuth Nichols Book Award.